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Chile: Political Fact Sheet**Constitution of 1980**

Ratified by a nationwide plebiscite in 1980, the constitution extended President Pinochet's term to March 1989. It provides for the unanimous selection by the four-man military junta of a single presidential candidate to be elected for an eight-year term in a plebiscite in 1989 and specifically permits Pinochet to run as a candidate. If the presidential candidate does not get 50 per cent of the vote Pinochet must call a direct election within a year. The constitution also calls for the enactment prior to 1989 of a series of laws legalizing political parties and establishing procedures for both the possible presidential election and congressional election slated for 1990. The most restrictive clause in the document is an transitory article which grants the executive an extraordinary range of arbitrary powers.

Succession Procedure

In the event of the death or incapacitation of the executive, the Transitory Articles of the constitution state that his replacement shall be selected by unanimous vote of the junta and will complete the remainder of the current term to 1989. During the selection process the presidency devolves upon the junta members according to the following rank: Commander of the Navy, Commander of the Air Force, Chief of the National Police (Carabineros), and the Commander of the Army. If after forty eight hours the junta cannot reach a unanimous decision, the National Security Council--comprised of the four junta members, the President of the Supreme Court, the Council of State, and the Comptroller General--must choose the new president by an absolute majority.

Armed Forces

The 60,000 member Army is politically and militarily dominant. Its representative and those of the other three services on the junta share power with the President and function as Chile's legislature. Pinochet is the Army commander; the vice commander, General Santiago Sinclair, was a close presidential adviser until his appointment last year. General Humberto Gordon Rubio, former director of the National Intelligence Center (CNI), officially will replace General Julio Canessa as the Army junta representative in January.

The Air Force, with about 13,000 men, is generally considered the most liberal of the services, and its commander and representative on the junta, General Fernando Matthei, frequently speaks out against Pinochet's hardline policies.

The Navy, with about 23,000 personnel, probably has less political weight than the Air Force and possibly the Carabineros. Its commander and junta member, Admiral Jose Merino, is somewhat unpredictable and has occasionally opposed Pinochet.

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The militia-like Carabineros, the national police force, number about 28,000 career personnel but have less prestige than the other services. The commander and junta member, General Rodolfo Stange, is highly regarded but has become increasingly critical of Pinochet's policies and irritated by his reliance on the Army for riot control.

The Moderate Opposition

The Democratic Alliance is a broad coalition stretching from the moderate right to the center left. Founded in 1983, the Alliance is dominated by Chile's largest democratic party, the centrist Christian Democrats.

The National Accord was signed by eleven parties in August, 1985 at the instigation of the Chilean Primate, Cardinal Fresno. The Accord articulated provisions for a return to democratic government in Chile. In addition to the seven parties of the Democratic Alliance, two conservative parties and two leftist parties were signatories.

The National Civic Assembly is composed of some 18 leading professional, labor, academic, and social groups. The Civic Assembly was founded in April 1986 with Christian Democratic Party sponsorship to satisfy demands from these groups for a greater political voice.

The Radical Left

The Popular Democratic Movement is an overt political coalition led by the Communist Party of Chile but declared illegal by the Supreme Court in January 1985.

The Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front has been primarily responsible for the more than 2,000 terrorist attacks--including the assault on Pinochet--and bombings in the past two years. The group has some 1,000 members and is affiliated with, but not controlled by, the Chilean Communist Party.

The Movement of the Revolutionary Left, once Chile's largest terrorist group, has become much less active in the past two years. It has 300 to 500 members and strong ties to Cuba.

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